

However, if the Minister gets his experts to take a sample from any of these areas, he will learn one reason why Prince Charles complained about swimming at inner beach areas. Effluent from garages where cars are washed and engines are steam-cleaned does not enter the sewerage system but goes into the drains, and this is an offence. The Government should police its own legislation.

The Government is talking about setting up some sort of authority on pollution but power already exists under the Health Act. The bay is being destroyed, but the trend could be halted if the Government awoke from its inertia and took the necessary action. The Government, which has been in office for fifteen years, thinks it will remain in office forever and therefore does not need to do anything about the two matters that I have mentioned—the Education Department's responsibility for the education of mentally retarded children and the pollution which is occurring every day in the inner bay area. The Government certainly shows that it does not care anything for the quality of life of mentally retarded children or the quality of life of those who seek reasonable recreational facilities on Port Phillip Bay.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth).—Mr. Chairman, I preface my remarks by saying how pleased I am to be elected to follow in the footsteps of our very good friend, Mr. Tom Darcy, who represented the Polwarth electorate for many years and endeared himself to many voters in the electorate for the humane way in which he handled their problems.

In speaking to the division of the Supply schedule relating to State development, I wish to make a few points concerning my electorate. Within it are the Otway Ranges, which contain one of the most beautiful rain forests in Victoria, and some of the most rugged coastal scenery in the world. These two assets can be of great benefit to Victoria and in particular to my electorate, but they

require development. Other honorable members have spoken of problems affecting their over-populated city electorates. My electorate has an abundance of free clean air but lacks population. Many metropolitan dwellers could with advantage go to live in my district, if jobs could be provided for them. It is difficult for somebody who lives in the country to understand why people persist in congregating in the types of areas I have heard mentioned so many times during the past few hours. Some way must be found to transfer people from over-populated areas to free, clean, fresh, unpolluted areas.

Within my electorate there is a large rural community. Dairying predominates, but there is a large meat industry that covers all aspects. I am pleased to note that a good deal of money is being devoted to agricultural extension services, animal health and other similar matters. In the area south of Colac, there is one of the highest concentrations of cattle, both beef and dairy, in Victoria. Probably there are also fewer extension facilities than in any other part of the State.

At various times, private veterinary officers have sent sample material to Queensland for analysis because it was quicker to do that than to have it tested in Victoria. I believe this is also happening in many other parts of the State. I realize that valid reasons exist for the problem but I mention the subject because the difficulty must be overcome quickly by the Government as it is an important aspect of agriculture today.

At present, the meat industry seems to be split into two major parts. The beef industry is at least keeping abreast of the rising costs that are evident in the community. On the other hand, for some reason, the prime lamb industry has got out of step with the rest of the community. This problem started some four years ago. It first came

into being when the Federal Minister for Trade and Industry allowed the lamb industry to be included in the New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. Admittedly, the Federal Minister received a certain amount of backing from the various farming organizations which handled meat, but one of the problems facing the lamb industry today is that in the farming organizations or through the Meat Board a predominance of cattlemen are handling the problems of the industry. The lamb industry is not always considered in the proper light. In Victoria, under the present system of selling meat, especially lamb, the producer must meet the ruling market price. On many occasions, this means accepting a low price for his product, but in the past he has been able to take a bonus when prices have risen. The industry has encouraged a gradual price rise through the winter, which in the lamb industry is the high cost of production period, because of the desirability of spreading production over twelve months to give the consumer fresh lamb throughout the year. During the winter months the producer must receive a price increase.

I point out that lamb has been included in the free trade agreement with New Zealand. It must be remembered that practically all the benefits deriving to Australia under this agreement will assist the secondary industries and workers of this country. In the past, the lamb industry has had the top taken off its market prices. This bad state of affairs has now been rectified, and it is to be hoped that it will be kept under control.

In recent years wheat quotas have been introduced into the structure of farm produce. This, too, has had a detrimental effect on the lamb industry. As was expected, the lamb industry in Victoria achieved a large increase in production because wheat areas, which produce 60 per cent of the total lamb in Australia, have found that they can quickly change to the production of lamb by using land not sown with wheat. In turn,

this has depressed our markets, because under the auction system the producer receives for his lamb the export and parity price at the time it is sold. Although on occasions there may be only 2 or 3 per cent of over-production, the prices are still governed by export prices ruling at the time. It can be seen at once that the lamb industry can be vitally affected by decisions that another rural industry has been forced to take.

I refer now to subsidies and the small farmer. Honorable members must understand what is meant by the term "small farmer". It does not mean that a man is farming a certain number of acres in a given place. The stage must be reached in Victoria when an economic farm unit provides a man and his family with a reasonable living for a reasonable amount of work, as compared with other sections of the community. An economic farm unit is not of any specified acreage. It depends on the district in which the farm is situated, the type of farming operation, and whether the farmer is cropping or running livestock.

One man and his family can look after only a certain number of stock. In the fat lamb industry this figure is between 1,800 and 2,000 sheep. In the wool industry the figure would be, perhaps, between 3,000 and 3,500 sheep. Once a property runs larger numbers it is not economical farming for a single unit farmer. When a farmer employs labour he is at the mercy of wage increases and he does not receive the same return from his work force that he obtains from what he puts into his own property. The problem must be understood. At present farmers are receiving a lot of false advice; for example they are told that they must diversify. Likewise, the advice that the size of farms must be increased is wrong. The present diversification that is occurring is bringing down one industry after another and this Government and this Parliament should be doing all in their power to keep our primary producers in their own industries.

A further point to come under notice recently is that the processors of peas and beans have raised their prices. Immediately a scream of protest came from the trade unions and workers. These people should consider what was happening under the existing price structure and the struggle that was going on between the processing companies. In the first place, what had been happening to the people who produce peas and beans? They are workers, just as are those employed in factories. For a numbers of years the producers of peas and beans were squeezed tighter and tighter by the processing firms, until at last those firms decided that higher prices must be charged. I am not aware whether this has been done correctly, but before protests are made consideration should be given to the producers of these commodities.

In the meat industry the producer of lamb is receiving, if he is fortunate, approximately 13 cents or 14 cents a pound for his product. In Victoria lamb costs between 7 and 15 cents a pound for delivery to city butchers' shops. This is more than the producer receives. In New South Wales, under a semi-Government authority, the flat rate is 12 cents a pound. I invite honorable members to think carefully of the costs of the food items that the consumer must buy. We must not begrudge the producer the fair price that he needs for the products that he produces.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).— I should like to congratulate the honorable member for Polwarth on his first contribution in debate in this Chamber. I assure the honorable member that he will have the full support of the Opposition in his efforts to influence this Government, which for the past fifteen years has sat on its tail, so to speak, and taken no action to prevent the drift of population to the city with the resultant denuding of the rural areas. If the honorable member for Polwarth intends to take up the cudgels on

behalf of the depleted districts of the State, I wish him every success because over the past fifteen years the Government has repeatedly ignored its responsibilities in this field.

The honorable member for Hawthorn, in his usual style, read and raved for about fifteen or twenty minutes and subjected honorable members to a series of distortions and misrepresentations. In an attempt to establish some semblance of argument on behalf of the Government, the honorable member quoted some percentages and referred to the year 1964, the crime rate, the year 1969, and the number of industrial disputes that this State has suffered. By imputation the honorable member attempted to establish that the industrial disputes stemmed from the actions of some people who have deliberately taken upon themselves the task of disrupting industry. The honorable member succeeded only in proving that he knows nothing about the subject on which he was speaking.

Mr. WILCOX.—You would be the expert in that field.

Mr. WILTON.—The Minister of Transport should be the last member of the Government to interject in this debate. Only today, the honorable gentleman admitted that he knew nothing about running the railways, saying, "It has nothing to do with me; it is a matter for the commissioners". What is the Minister's position when the unions involved in the railway industry wish to establish negotiations with the commissioners? Does the honorable gentleman, acting on behalf of the Government, instruct the Railways Commissioners concerning their attitude, and do other Ministers act similarly in respect of their departments?

No union officials in Victoria or in the Commonwealth have the right or the authority to withhold labour from a particular industry. Matters of this type are decided by the union organizations concerned. Government members, who have some understanding of the trade union movement,